



Cardinal-Hickory Creek Ag Impact Statement Available to Public

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MADISON – The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection has published its agricultural impact statement for the Cardinal-Hickory Creek electric line project, recommending ways to reduce harmful effects on farmland and farm operations.

The statement is available online at datcp.wi.gov. Citizens may also request a paper copy of the document. The statement will be submitted as testimony to the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin, which has approval authority for high-voltage electric transmission lines.

The proposed 345-kilovolt transmission line would start at the Hickory Creek Substation in Dubuque County, Iowa, and cross the Mississippi River to follow one of several potential routes from Cassville to the Cardinal Substation near Madison. The project would also include a new substation near Montfort and changes to other substations.

There are 692 agricultural properties along the various potential routes, totaling about 3,700 acres. The actual amount of farmland and number of farms affected would depend on which route is chosen.

The statement notes that the project crosses one of Wisconsin's most productive agricultural areas, as well as the ridges and valleys of the Driftless Area. Because of that topography, many farmers have installed erosion-control practices that could be changed by this project. Many of the farms that use organic practices could be affected by construction and maintenance of a power line. Most of the potential routes run cross-country rather than along field edges or property boundaries, which may cause more damage to soil and interfere with farming operations. Some of the project impacts could be reduced by choosing the routes located along roads and highways.

Agricultural impact statements are required for projects initiated by organizations with condemnation authority, if they will take more than 5 acres from any one farm. Electric transmission lines, natural gas lines, roads, airports, wastewater treatment plants and parks are examples of projects that may require a statement.

DATCP staff attended three PSC public meetings to talk to landowners and sent a questionnaire to 377 farmland owners who could have at least three acres taken as an easement or outright purchase for the project. More than 125 landowners responded. The report recommends requirements that the PSC should impose and practices the applicants should follow to reduce agricultural impacts.

The applicants seeking permission to build the line are American Transmission Co. LLC and ATC Management Inc., ITC Midwest LLC, and Dairyland Power Cooperative.

To request a paper copy of the statement, call (608) 224-4650; email DATCPagimpactstatements@wi.gov, or write to DATCP, ATTN Ag Impact Statements, P.O. Box 8911, Madison, WI 53708-8911.

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